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Civic Education and the Democratic Mind: A Study of a School-Based Intervention for Youth Political Engagement and Behavior

Abstract

The public education system in the United States was founded upon a civic mission, but youth have been historically politically disengaged. While research has been conducted on the impact of high school civics courses on youth civic engagement, research on targeted school-based interventions for youth political engagement is limited and outdated at the high school level. This paper explores the effects of a five week voter education curricular intervention on youth political engagement and behavior through a program evaluation study conducted in three Philadelphia schools. The curricular intervention included three lessons and guidelines for organizing peer-to-peer voter registration drives, and was developed by undergraduate and graduate students at the University of Pennsylvania. This curricular intervention was designed to be implemented in high school social science and history classes. Future findings will support the civic education system in improving civic education curricula, and expanding youth civic and political participation.

Keywords

youth political engagement, civics, school-based curricular intervention, voting, voter registration, voter education

Disciplines

Education | Political Science

CIVIC EDUCATION AND THE DEMOCRATIC MIND:
A Study of a School-Based Intervention for Youth Political Engagement and Behavior

By

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An Undergraduate Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

WHARTON RESEARCH SCHOLARS

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ABSTRACT

The public education system in the United States was founded upon a civic mission, but youth have been historically politically disengaged. While research has been conducted on the impact of high school civics courses on youth civic engagement, research on targeted school-based interventions for youth political engagement is limited and outdated at the high school level. This paper explores the effects of a five week voter education curricular intervention on youth political engagement and behavior through a program evaluation study conducted in three Philadelphia schools. The curricular intervention included three lessons and guidelines for organizing peer-to-peer voter registration drives, and was developed by undergraduate and graduate students at the University of Pennsylvania. This curricular intervention was designed to be implemented in high school social science and history classes. Future findings will support the civic education system in improving civic education curricula, and expanding youth civic and political participation.

Keywords

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INTRODUCTION

While a thriving democracy requires the active political participation of its people, adolescents and young adults have historically been politically disengaged. A study conducted last year found that voter turnout for adults between 18 and 29 years of age was significantly lower than voter turnout for any other age category in nearly every state in both the 2012 and 2016 elections (Trangucci, Ali, Gelman, and Rivers 2018). Furthermore, during the 2014 midterm elections, just 16% of voters in this age group turned out to the polls. This trend of political disengagement amongst adolescents and young adults is not just a recent phenomenon. The highest ever recorded turnout of youth voters occurred after the Twenty-sixth Amendment was ratified, which lowered the voting age from 21 to 18 on the heels of the Vietnam War. Since the election of 1972, youth voter turnout has generally steadily declined. In the early 2000s, a nationally representative longitudinal survey of adolescents and young adults was conducted, measuring responses on two axes: “how do you feel about politics in general” and “do you consider yourself to be a very ‘political’ person.” While an affirmative answer to these questions was coded for broadly, sixty-nine percent of respondents were considered to be either apathetic, uninformed, distrustful, or disempowered (Snell 2010).

This persistent political disengagement amongst youth and young adults is often attributed to a failure of the civic education system. The public education system was, in part, founded to prepare youth to be active participants in our collective project of self-governance. In particular, schools play a critical role in both imparting civic knowledge and teaching young people the skills necessary to meaningfully engage and participate in a democracy (Campbell 2005; Flanagan, Cumsille, Gill, and Gallay 2007; Torney-Purta 2002). If youth and young adults are so

civically and politically disengaged, perhaps the civic education system in the United States has not fulfilled its most fundamental mission.

A study of how to increase youth political engagement and participation is particularly important because young people can make a substantial difference in elections. There are forty-six million eligible youth voters, representing nearly 21% of all eligible voters. If young people voted in larger numbers, they might significantly alter the results of elections. Additionally, voting is habit-forming; people who vote in their youth are more likely to vote as they enter adulthood. This means that building a new generation of American voters likely requires encouraging young people to vote now.

In light of this evidence, this study seeks to understand the impact of a school-based intervention on youth political engagement and behavior. The intervention studied is a curriculum designed by graduate and undergraduate students enrolled in EDUC 722, an Academically Based Community Service (ABCS) course at the University of Pennsylvania's Graduate School of Education. This course was created by *The Ballot Z Project*, an organization founded by the author of the current study to bring voter education curricula to Philadelphia public schools to boost youth voter turnout. The curriculum designed by the EDUC 722 students consisted of three lessons that would be taught in high school social science and history classes. These lessons focused on the importance of voting and on developing skills for informed voting. The curricular intervention was to culminate with a peer-to-peer voter registration drive organized by the high school students in each class. Partnerships were established with five Philadelphia public high schools to deliver the curricular intervention to students in social science and history classes. Of these five schools, three opted in to their students being included in the current study: West Philadelphia High School, George Washington Carver High School of

Engineering and Science, and Kensington Health Sciences Academy. As a result, 195 high school students across seven social science and history classes were to be included in this study.

Thus far, only five other high school interventions for political engagement and behavior have been studied analytically: CityWorks, Project Citizen, Kids Voting, Student Voices, and Generation Citizen. CityWorks transforms students into citizens of a fictional city as they engage in six simulations of prototypical processes related to local government (Kahne, Chi, and Middaugh 2002). Project Citizen and Generation Citizen also aim to teach students about local advocacy and governance. In these programs, students identify community policy problems, conduct research to develop policy solutions, and present their proposals (Root and Northup 2007; Ballard, Cohen, and Littenberg-Tobias 2016). Kids Voting, on the other hand, is a multisystemic intervention that engages both students and their families in a curriculum focused on the history of voting rights, while Student Voices provides students with practical political knowledge on how to research candidate platforms, use media to access information, and carry out a campaign (McDevitt and Kiouisis 2006; Syvertsen et al. 2009).

Given that previous research is limited, an additional study in this area will contribute to the preponderance of evidence that school-based interventions can impact youth political engagement and behavior. Specifically, a better understanding of school-based curricular interventions might inform educators about curricular methods to promote active civic and political engagement amongst youth. Ideally, this study should support the civic education system in achieving its mission of rearing the next generation of democratically active young Americans. Furthermore, understanding the impact of these interventions on youth political behavior might also inform future efforts to increase youth electoral participation and turnout more specifically. The intervention assessed in the current study will educate students about their

voting rights with the goal of reducing participatory barriers, which is especially important for minority youth given the particularly low rates of electoral participation observed for this group.

Furthermore, the nature of the intervention studied in this research is unique. First, none of the other interventions that were previously studied include a peer-to-peer voter registration drive component organized in the high school communities. Second, the sample in this study is notably different from those utilized by the others. While the samples in previous studies consist primarily of white or Asian students, the high school students included in this study are predominantly African American and Hispanic. Furthermore, none of the previous studies include public schools located in Philadelphia. Finally, almost all of the previous studies were conducted prior to 2006, with the most recent study analyzing data from 2013. Since then, the political environment has changed tremendously. For these reasons, this study is expected to contribute significant new insights.

THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

The public education system in the United States was founded upon a civic mission. According to political theorists, civic education was designed to build a politically informed and educated populace, which was necessary for the success of democratic self-governance. In other words, civic education was meant to provide young Americans with the requisite knowledge and skills they needed to be active democratic citizens in the future (Kahne, Chi, and Middaugh 2006). Beyond this, the classroom was also seen as a forum for deliberative democracy, or the democratic debate among citizens necessary for a robust and vibrant republic. In this way, civic education would be responsible for developing a set of shared values amongst young Americans towards some conception of the public interest (Dewey 1916; Gutmann and Ben-Porath 2015). In this perspective, civic education prepares the next generation of Americans to participate in the

collective project of self-governance, through voting and engaging in other civic responsibilities, and empowered by an understanding of the common good.

But contemporary scholarship on whether civics courses have successfully engendered political engagement remains bifurcated. While some scholars have found a statistically significant positive correlation between taking a civics course in high school and future political engagement, others have recognized the failure of civic education in this regard. In a study conducted by Siegel-Stechler (2019), a survey of over four thousand young adults between the ages of 18 and 24 revealed that taking a civics class in high school increases the probability of voting by 5.4% (p. 249). Siegel-Stechler found similar positive correlations between extracurricular participation and voting behavior, identifying that the probability of voting increases by 2.4% with each additional association to which a student might belong (p. 249). But still, other research discredits these findings. Early analytical studies conducted in the sixties reveal no statistically significant relationship between civic education and future civic engagement (Langton and Jennings 1968). A more recent study analyzed a longitudinal and nationally representative dataset consisting of more than twenty thousand students and found that the number of social studies courses a student took in high school was not significantly correlated with registering to vote (Callahan, Muller, and Schiller 2010). Most recently, a meta-analysis of hundreds of studies was conducted to assess whether “civic education for young people increases the normative political participation of young adults” (Manning and Edwards 2014). In this case, normative political participation refers to voting and registering to vote. The analysis determined that civic education failed to show significant effects on future voting behavior or voter registration, concluding that “civic education has broadly ‘failed’ in its specified aim” (p. 3).

The potential “failure” of the civic education system motivates the research in this study. It is difficult to ignore pervasive youth political disengagement, reflected by historically low levels of youth voter turnout which have generally declined since the passage of the Twenty-sixth Amendment in 1971. Young people are just significantly less likely to participate in electoral politics (Keeter, Zukin, Andolina, and Jenkins 2002; Wattenberg 2015). And while research has been conducted on the broad impact, or lack thereof, of high school civics courses, research on targeted school-based interventions for youth political engagement and behavior is significantly limited and generally outdated at the high school level. Perhaps targeted civics interventions in high school classrooms greatly influence future youth democratic engagement. As a result, this study seeks to answer the question: how does a targeted high school voter education curricular intervention impact youth political engagement and political behavior?

Thus far, only five school-based interventions in this area have been studied. The initial results are promising and suggest that school-based interventions can significantly influence both youth political engagement and behavior, in the short and long-term. More specifically, one analysis revealed that a school-based intervention focused on community advocacy called Project Citizen led to increased levels of civic knowledge and discourse among students (Root and Northup 2007). Furthermore, studies of Generation Citizen, an intervention focused on local civic engagement, and Students Voices, an intervention designed to provide students with tangible civic skills, demonstrate that school-based interventions targeting political engagement can have a positive impact on political dispositions as well; results from these studies show that students who received these interventions felt increased self-confidence in their ability to participate politically and increased political efficacy, or a belief that they have the power to influence government (Ballard et al. 2016; Syvertsen et al. 2009). Still, another study of a

multisystemic intervention called Kids Voting, a program which provides a voting rights history curriculum to parents and children, found significant benefits of the intervention on future political behavior, including volunteering, activism, and voting. The analysis noted that these benefits were apparent several years after the intervention, suggesting that these programs can even have long-term effects (McDevitt and Kiouisis 2006).

To study whether targeted school-based interventions can impact youth political engagement and behavior, designing an appropriate intervention is essential. Several education scholars have suggested that open classroom environments, featuring explicit discussions of political issues in the classroom, lead to greater civic knowledge, as measured by the percentage of correct answers in responses to nearly fifty questions surrounding broad democratic concepts (Campbell 2008; Torney-Purta 2002). But studies have also shown that discussion-based teaching can be influential beyond civic knowledge. One study finds that open discussions of voting and elections is positively associated with students' intentions to vote when they become eligible (Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald, and Schulz 2001). Similarly, another study of high school students in California and Chicago finds that discussions of societal issues in the classroom can increase student interest in politics and feelings of political efficacy, or the belief that we, as individuals, can influence the government (Kahne, Crow, and Lee 2013). A related study shows that exposing students to controversial issues through discussion-based teaching surrounding civic rights and responsibilities has the potential to build students' civic capacity (Hess 2009).

Furthermore, specific classroom activities surrounding voting, supplementing discussion-based teaching, might also be critical. Recently, a controlled experiment across sixteen college campuses found that student registration rates increased by 10% when students received a voter registration presentation from another student in class. Importantly, voter turnout also increased

by 10% as a result of these presentations (Bennion and Nickerson 2016). These findings are supported by research which shows that adolescents and emerging adults are more likely to vote if encouraged by a friend (Bond et al. 2012).

Based on this literature, we predict that a voter education curricular intervention in high school social science and history classes – featuring interactive discussion-based teaching in the classroom on political (e.g. voting) and societal issues (e.g. voting rights and responsibilities), along with peer-to-peer voter registration drives – will increase both youth political engagement (political interest, political discussion, and political efficacy) and youth political behavior (voter registration, intention to vote, and intention to participate civically). To test this hypothesis, a program evaluation study was designed to be conducted through a quasi-experiment in three Philadelphia public high schools.

MATERIALS

The current study examines the effects of a voter education curriculum developed by undergraduate and graduate students at the University of Pennsylvania. These students created this curriculum in EDUC 722, an Academically Based Community Service (ABCS) course at the University of Pennsylvania's Graduate School of Education (GSE). This course was developed by *The Ballot Z Project*, an organization founded by the author of the current study to bring voter education curricula to Philadelphia public schools in an effort to boost youth voter turnout. The course was taught by Dr. Rand Quinn, Associate Professor at GSE, in Spring 2020.

It was critical for the graduate and undergraduate students to develop the curricular intervention assessed in this study, rather than merely teach the curriculum previously developed and implemented at other high schools by *The Ballot Z Project*, because the students would be better teachers and facilitators of the curricular intervention in the high school social science and

history classes if they felt they had a stake in the successful outcome of the intervention by developing lessons themselves. But it was also important to provide the students with the materials and requisite knowledge necessary to write a successful curriculum. As such, over the first four weeks of EDUC 722 in Spring 2020, the students read and discussed foundational academic literature on youth civic and political engagement, and university-assisted community partnerships. Specifically, the students studied the practice of civic education from a political science, social science, and broader education theory perspective, and learned about Participatory Action Research (PAR) and mutually beneficial university-school-community partnerships.

Subsequently, the curriculum development process began. First, students visited each of the five schools where the curricular intervention would be implemented. Three schools opted into being included in the current study. At these visits, the students identified what the high school students hoped to learn and assessed where the high school students had gaps in their knowledge about voting. After these visits and given guidance from the author of the current study, the University of Pennsylvania undergraduate and graduate students honed the overarching goal of the curricular intervention. The overarching goal was to excite students to be civically engaged by teaching them about the power of voting and by providing them with the tools they needed to be informed voters. Next, the graduate and undergraduate students brainstormed and outlined a three lesson curriculum to achieve this stated goal. They were broken into small teams to write initial drafts of each of the lessons. These first drafts subsequently underwent substantial peer and instructor review. Given feedback from these initial reviews, students proceeded to revise their lessons. These revised lessons were then sent to experienced educators in the Philadelphia School District and to esteemed professors at the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of

Education. This panel of educators and professors provided another round of revisions and feedback, and finally, the students produced final versions of their lessons given this guidance.

Each of the three lessons was built on the discussion-based teaching model, given the benefits of this approach previously discussed. In *Lesson 1: The Importance of Voting* (Exhibit 1), high school students learn about youth political power (for social science classes) or the evolution of voter suppression through present day (for history classes). This lesson is designed for students to tangibly feel the power of their vote. In *Lesson 2: Becoming Informed Voters* (Exhibit 2), high school students learn how to research candidate platforms, understand the differences between major political parties' issue stances, and begin to identify their own political leanings. Building on Lesson 1, which teaches students about *why* voting is important, Lesson 2 provides students with the essential skills they need to cast educated and informed votes. In *Lesson 3: The Voting Process* (Exhibit 3), high school students learn about the eligibility rules and processes required to vote in the US. This lesson prepares students to register their peers at a voter registration drive and to convince members of their communities to vote.

Subsequently, after the instruction of these three lessons, the high school students are tasked with organizing peer-to-peer voter registration drives in their schools (Exhibit 4). These drives are the culmination of the intervention because it gives students the opportunity to practically apply their knowledge from the lessons through a local civic engagement activity. Furthermore, research suggests that youth are more likely to vote when encouraged by peers, as previously discussed. The following exhibits document all of the materials required for the intervention: Lessons 1 through 3, along with the guidelines for the organization of the peer-to-peer voter registration drives. In response to COVID, versions of Lessons 1 through 3 that are compatible with online learning are also included in the appendix at the back of this report.

EXHIBIT 1

Lesson One of the Curricular Intervention

Lesson 1: The Importance of Voting
<p>Civics Standard: 5.2.12.A Evaluate an individual's civil rights, responsibilities, and obligations in contemporary governments.</p> <p>History Standard: 8.1.U.A Evaluate patterns of continuity and change over time, applying context of events.</p>
<p>Lesson 1 Objective: Students will understand the power and significance of voting. Students will <i>either</i> evaluate youth political power as voters (social science) <i>or</i> will explain the history and evolution of voter suppression through the present (history).</p>
<p>Civics Lesson Question: <i>Why is voting important?</i></p> <p>History Lesson Question: <i>How have voting rights evolved?</i></p>
<p>Materials: Printed Voter Identity Notecard Samples (Appendix A or B) for each student, and tape, blackboard or whiteboard.</p>
<p>Key Vocabulary: Voting rights, Political power, Voter suppression</p>
<p>Launch: Ask students to begin by discussing “What is your opinion on voting?” or “When in your life have you felt powerful, like you could make a change? Why?”</p> <p>Voting is the foundation of our democratic society. Ask students: What do we vote for? [Some possible answers: American Idol, class president, elected representatives]. How cool is that? Our voices get to be heard! Tell students that in the next three lessons, we will be discussing voting and will culminate instruction with the organization of a voter registration drive.</p> <p>Context: Many students in this class will be eligible to vote in the next election, which is the presidential primary election on June 2, 2020. The following activity is meant to replicate past elections to show how future elections might be affected if youth mobilized to vote.</p> <p>Mock Election: The Importance of Voting</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Hand notecards out to students (Appendix A).2. Activity starts: Everyone is 18 and eligible to vote! Did you know that 30% of all eligible voters are between the ages of 18 and 25? If everyone voted we could have a significant influence on elections.3. Have students close their eyes and raise their hands to vote on a topic. Prior to this activity, the instructor should come up with an issue that is relevant and likely polarizing for which students will vote (e.g. uniforms at school, phones in classrooms). Students should first close their eyes and vote on the topic now to see what the result would be if everyone voted. Write this result down to share it with the class at the end of the following activity to compare.

4. Now, say: Everyone stand-up. Unfortunately, not all of you registered. If you didn't register to vote (according to your note card), please sit down. Can someone share why? (Call on 3 students). Then say: Looks like only 60% of you registered to vote.
5. Now, say: It's finally election day! But even among those of you who *did* register to vote, many of you did not show up to vote. Please sit down if you didn't show up (according to your note card). Can someone share why not? (Call on 3 students). Then say: This election is representative of real life — Young people have the lowest voter turnout of any other age category. Only 45% of young people voted in the 2012 presidential election.
6. Now let's vote. If you *did* show up to vote (students standing), close your eyes and raise your hand if ... (the instructor should ask students to vote on the same issue as before).
7. Instructor will count votes and announce the result.
8. Now, say: Raise your hand if you disagreed with the results of the vote. If you were sitting down and could not vote but had an opinion, how did you feel? [Some possible answers: I was frustrated that a decision that affects me was made without my input, I realized that I shouldn't give up my opportunity to have a say].

Debrief Discussion: Instructor draws a chart with two categories on the board – Non-Vote and Vote. Instructor asks the students to put their note cards in the category they fall into (using tape). Instructor asks students to come up with three reasons why people might *not* vote, according to the notecards, writing answers on the board. If the students have not identified voter suppression, the instructor writes it on the board, asking which notecards might fall into that category. Instructor describes how voter suppression tactics like robo-calls, absentee ballot disinformation, and intimidation still occur today. The other reasons for why people might *not* vote include “failure to register” and “not believing in the power or importance of voting.” Finish up by asking students’ to share their final thoughts on how youth think about voting.

The following are additional activities for a longer class.

Context: The class watches and discusses two brief video clips to introduce the topic of youth voting and political power. We will discuss the idea of political power and how this power can be used by groups or communities through voting and political engagement. After the video, we will approach the issue of voting through a historical lens. Specifically, by looking at images of political protests (Black Lives Matter & Civil Rights Movement) and questioning the desired outcomes of the participants.

Discussion: Voting is power. Young people are power. Ask the students: In what ways have you fought for what you believe in? Young people have historically mobilized in social movements. Are there any examples we can think of? [Some possible answers: Protests against the Vietnam War, recent climate change movements]. Why do you think that few young people vote? Who does that benefit?

Present: These video clips to the class.

1. [Non-Voters See How Difficult It Is For Others To Vote](#)
2. [The Power of the Youth Vote | Mindy Romero | TEDxUCDavis](#)

Debrief Discussion: What stood out to you in these videos? What did the speaker mean when she said voting is about power?

Break Out Activity: In small groups, compare and contrast images and ideas on Powerful Protests. Encourage students to think about the purpose of each protest movement: *What was each movement trying to achieve?*

Debrief Discussion: At the end of this activity, bring the class back together. Stress to students the importance of civic engagement.

Ask students: *What was each movement trying to achieve? Which movement better stresses civic action and power? Why?* (E.g., BLM appeared to be passionate about justice, but did not seem to necessarily encourage political action.)

Ask students: *Why would people risk their lives to vote?* This discussion should center around the importance people attributed to their belief in their right to participate.

This is an adjusted Mock Election activity for a history class.

After Launch – Segue into a conversation around how voting requirements have changed over time and how we will be discussing that in this class.

Context: Show simple powerpoint about key moments in voting history (i.e. The Declaration of Independence does not explicitly state that all people should have a right to vote, the passage of the 15th and 19th amendments, the March on Washington, the evolution of voting rights for immigrants, minorities, and women).

Activity: Instructors should ask the same question to the class in the years 1776, 1850, 1920, 1962 and, finally, 2020 (e.g. Should school lunch be all vegetarian?) Instructors will distribute note cards to students with different roles that represent real people from history (e.g. land-owners, non-landowners, convicted felons, a man who didn't pass the literacy test) (Appendix B). After providing an overview of who could vote before each year, instructor will tell the students to, based on what they just learned, only vote if they would have been able to according to their assigned role from their notecard (they will vote by raising their hands and closing their eyes). For 1776, we will take a tally of the votes and then have a brief discussion about why students did or did not vote, and why they voted the way that they did. For those who could not vote, how did that make them feel? Does this feel like a fair decision? We repeat this process for 1850 (now women, non-African-American minorities, and many non-Christian religious groups cannot vote), ask the same question, and tally the new results. We repeat this process with 1920 (women can now vote), 1962 (Jim Crow makes it difficult for African Americans to vote) and, finally, 2020. For the 2020 vote, we will distribute new notecards, some of which feature misinformation (e.g. don't raise your hand if you want to vote, you will raise your hand in 5 minutes) and other modern day suppression tactics.

Debrief Discussion: At the end of the activity, instructors will lead a class discussion. Did the final election results in each year seem like a fair representation of what your characters wanted (as stated on your notecards)? How did it feel to not be able to vote? What about when

you finally could? Did the elections become fairer over time? If you could change voting laws, who would be able to vote in the upcoming election? Why?

Appendices

Appendix A – Sample Notecards for Lesson 1: Social Science Class

This can be expanded based on the number of students in a class. Try to ensure that roughly 60% are registered and 45% vote. Each number below represents text that would be written on one notecard. Each student will receive one notecard.

1. You don't feel that any of the candidates represent you, so even though you're registered to vote, you didn't show up to the polls.
2. You just turned 18, but missed the registration deadline because you didn't know that you were eligible to vote in this election. You can't vote.
3. You are registered, but your friends received robo-calls telling you that today's election is tomorrow, so you didn't show up to the polls.
4. You don't believe that your vote will make a difference, so you don't vote.
5. You don't have a driver's license or passport yet, and no valid form of government ID, so you are turned away at the polls.
6. You vote because you strongly support a candidate.
7. You vote because there is an issue in your community that you would like to address.
8. You vote because your ancestors and relatives fought for your right to vote.
9. You vote because your undocumented friend, who can't vote, asked you to vote on an issue that is important to him.
10. You vote because you feel that if you don't, someone else will for you.

Appendix B – Sample Notecards for Lesson 1: History Class

Each blurb below represents text that would be written on one notecard.

1776: Sample Notecard – You are Benjamin Franklin, a land-owning white man who lived from 1706-1790. You initially owned and dealt slaves, but began speaking out against slavery by the late 1750s, believing that African Americans and women should be allowed in school.

1850: Sample Notecard – You are an immigrant from Ireland who arrived last year. You are working towards citizenship.

1920: Sample Notecard – You are a white woman working as a secretary at a law firm. You want your daughter to attend a segregated school.

1962: Sample Notecard – You are a 62-year-old African American farmer who went straight to work after middle school and was never able to pass the literacy test given at the polls. You believe your grandchildren should have access to desegregated quality public education.

2020: Sample Notecard – Don't raise your hand to vote in this election. They will count hands at a later date OR You are a recently released 26-year-old who was wrongfully convicted of murder in 2015. As a convicted felon, you are not allowed to vote in this election.

EXHIBIT 2

Lesson Two of the Curricular Intervention

Lesson 2: Becoming Informed Voters	
Standard: 5.3.12.D Evaluate the roles of political parties , interest groups, and mass media in politics and in government.	
Lesson 2 Objective: Students will understand how to read and assess candidate platforms. Students will also be able to explain the differences between major political parties' issue stances.	
Lesson Questions: <i>How do I read a candidate's platform? What is a political party? What are the differences between major parties' issue stances in the United States?</i>	
Materials: Printed Handouts (Appendix A and B) for each student, and sticky notes, two anchor charts, laptops.	
Key Vocabulary: Political party, Democrat, Republican, Platform	
Launch: Side of the Room Activity. Instructor will explain that two options will be presented and students will move to the left of the room if they prefer the first option or the right of the room if they prefer the second option. Examples:	
<u>Left</u>	<u>Right</u>
Tik tok	Instagram
Kids should have to go to school until the age of 18	Kids should be able to choose to not be in school
Government should enforce stay-at-home order during a pandemic	Government should not enforce stay-at-home order during a pandemic
The voting age should be 18	The voting age should be 16
Instructor will ask: Have you noticed that some of your classmates were on your side for several of the questions?	
Then, say: This is how political parties form – when a group of people come together because they share similar stances on many issues. They will work together to get people from their group elected to office, and to fight for what they believe in.	

Then, say: While there are several political parties in the U.S., the two major parties are the Democratic Party and the Republican Party.

Turn & Talk: What do you already know about these two political parties? Each student will be given two sticky notes to write down what they know about Republicans on one and what they know about Democrats on the other. Students will then stick their sticky notes on two anchor charts on the board, titled “What We Already Know About Republicans” and “What We Already Know About Democrats.”

Activity: Instructor will display list of issues. These issues will be identified based on student interest either at the end of the previous lesson or outside of class, with assistance from the history or social science teachers. Some issue topics may include healthcare, immigration, abortion / women’s rights, LGBTQ rights, the environment, gun control, foreign policy, military spending. Instructor will ask students to work in pairs and select a topic from the list. Explain that the students will research platforms from various Democratic and Republican candidates to observe patterns. Students will visit the following websites and collect information about their issue topic from the candidates’ platforms.

Republicans

Senator (PA) Pat Toomey – <https://www.toomey.senate.gov/>

House of Rep. (District 10) Scott Perry – <https://perry.house.gov/>

House of Rep. (District 11) Lloyd Smucker – www.electsmuckerpa.com/values/

Philly City Council Member David Oh – <http://davidoh.com/issues/>

Senator (UT) Mitt Romney – <https://www.romney.senate.gov/issues>

Governor (IN) Eric Holcomb – <https://holcombforindiana.com/issues/>

Democrats

Senator (PA) Bob Casey – <https://www.casey.senate.gov/>

House of Rep. (District 3) Dwight Evans – <https://evans.house.gov/>

House of Rep. (District 2) Brendan Boyle – <https://boyle.house.gov/>

Senator (MA) Elizabeth Warren – <https://elizabethwarren.com/>

Governor (MI) Gretchen Whitmer – <https://www.gretchenwhitmer.com/issues/>

Governor (PA) Tom Wolf – <https://www.governor.pa.gov/>

Debrief Discussion: Instructor will hand out printed worksheet (Appendix A). Instructor will ask students to share themes they found across a political party for a certain issue and fill in the chart on the board, as students fill in their own worksheets based on their classmates’ findings. Instructor will then ask students if they encountered any candidates whose issue stance did not align with their respective party’s platform. Through this discussion, students will come to the conclusion that not all candidates will align 100% with their respective party.

Activity: Instructor will then hand out printed worksheet (Appendix B). Instructor will explain that the chart on this handout outlines how individuals who identify as politically liberal or conservative may view the ideal role of the U.S. government. While many liberals and conservatives share these views within their groups, not everyone who identifies as liberal or conservative shares *all* of these views.

Extension Activity: Instructor will remind students that we have studied political parties in this lesson. Instruction will explain that students will now be given the opportunity to see where they may stand or identify their political leanings. Instructor will refer students to the political typology quiz: <https://www.isidewith.com/political-quiz>.

Debrief Discussion: Today we have provided you with the tools you need to research candidate platforms, assess political parties, and identify your own political leanings. Revisit the sticky notes you wrote at the beginning of class. *What more do you now know? What have you learned today? What surprises you?*

Appendices

Appendix A – Handout

Note that the issues listed below are subject to change based on the student-selected topics.

	Democratic Party	Republican Party
Healthcare		
Immigration		
Abortion / Women's Rights		
Environment		
Gun Control		
Military Spending		
Criminal Justice		
Foreign Policy		
Prison Reform		

Appendix B – Handout

The following chart outlines how individuals who identify as politically **liberal** or **conservative** may view **the ideal role of the U.S. government**. While many liberals and conservatives share these views within their groups, not everyone who identifies as liberal or conservative shares *all* of these views.

Politically Liberal (Democrats)	Politically Conservative (Republicans)
<p><i>The government should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • protect a woman’s right to make decisions about her reproductive health; • support the right of LGBTQ-identifies individuals to marry • regulate gun purchases with restrictions and background checks; • decriminalize marijuana; • provide a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants; • implement a progressive tax where the wealthy pay more; • ensure businesses pay taxes just like individuals; • enforce environmental regulations to protect the earth; • increase publicly-funded welfare programs for individuals experiencing poverty or other challenges; • support publicly-provided healthcare to increase equitable access; • support a federal minimum wage policy that impacts all states equitably. 	<p><i>The government should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • protect a fetus’ right to life; • support marriage between a man and woman; • regulate gun purchases very little, if at all; • maintain criminal status of marijuana; • provide increased deportations a boarder wall to keep out undocumented immigrants; • implement a tax where everyone pays the same amount; • ensure businesses receive tax breaks so they can stay competitive; • enforce business freedom by reducing environmental regulations; • reduce publicly-funded welfare programs for individuals experiencing poverty or other challenges; • support privately-provided healthcare to increase choice • support states to choose a min wage policy that only impacts their state.

Please complete the following.

Political conservatives (Republicans) tend to support government that ...

While, political liberals (Democrats) tend to support government that ...

EXHIBIT 3

Lesson Three of the Curricular Intervention

Lesson 3: The Voting Process
Standard: 5.3.12.F Evaluate the elements of the election process .
Lesson 3 Objective: Students will understand the basic requirements and processes required to vote in the U.S. and will be prepared to convince their peers to register to vote at a voter registration drive.
Lesson Question: <i>How can we support others in the voting process?</i>
Materials: Printed Handouts (Appendix A) and PA Voter Registration Application (printed)
Key Vocabulary: Registration, Elevator pitch
<p>Launch: To begin this lesson, students will independently determine voter requirements to the best of their knowledge. This activity is meant to introduce students to understanding what it means to be a voter in the U.S. as well as to understanding if they qualify themselves.</p> <p>Instructor will hand out the printed worksheet (Appendix A) to each student. Students will work in pairs to circle which of the listed requirements they think are necessary to vote.</p> <p>When students are finished, display the following requirements on the board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 18 years of age by the date of the election• U.S. citizen• Residence in PA for at least 30 days by date of election• **First time voters** have one of the following acceptable IDs:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Driver's license○ U.S. passport○ Military, student, or employee ID○ Voter registration card○ Current utility bill, bank statement, paycheck or government check○ Any ID issued by the commonwealth or federal government<p>*Note: An ID without your photo must have your address on it</p> <p>Debrief Discussion: Instructor will ask, <i>Were there more or fewer requirements than you anticipated? How do you feel about these requirements?</i> At this time, students will reflect on whether they are eligible to vote in PA.</p> <p>Activity: Students will become familiar with the registration form and will practice guiding their peers through the process of registering in preparation for the voter registration drive.</p>

Tell students that regardless of whether they can vote, they can still play an important role in the election process. Instructor will ask: *How can we support voters during an election?* Explain that today, we are going to prepare for one way that we can help support voters: by holding a voter registration drive. Ask: *Can you explain what a voter registration drive is and why it is important?* Fill in gaps in student knowledge by explaining that a voter registration drive is an event where volunteers support their community members by helping them register to vote, providing them with the necessary materials, and answering any questions.

Instructor will open the PA voter registration application on the board (using projector). Instructor will use this [powerpoint](#) to talk through each step of the application.

- Be explicit about updated voter registration dates. The Pennsylvania primary has been moved to June 2nd, so the voter registration deadline for the primary is May 18th.
- Explain to students that in Pennsylvania, they can choose to register for a political party or remain unaffiliated. If they remain unaffiliated, they cannot vote in Democratic or Republican primaries – only general elections. If they register for a party, they do not need to vote for that party.

Instructor will provide each student with a printed voter registration form and will break students into pairs to practice registering one another to vote. Students should take turns being the “voter” and the “volunteer,” and should model asking questions as their peers would at the voter registration drive. Instructor will circulate and will help answer any student questions.

Debrief Discussion: After students are finished, ask – *What has been easy? What has been challenging?* Call on pairs to give feedback to each other on how to improve the registration process. *What must you keep in mind when registering a potential voter?*

Activity: Students will practice encouraging and persuading their peers to vote in preparation for a voter registration drive. Students will use everything they have learned over all three lessons to create a pitch that is convincing and compelling to their peers.

Instructor will have students brainstorm in pairs some issues in the previous lessons that had the largest impact on them and made them want to vote. Call on two or three students to share with the class what stuck with them most and why it was effective.

Instructor will explain to students that now that they have learned why young people should express their voice through voting and registering to vote, we need to practice how we will encourage our peers to vote at a registration drive or anywhere else! Instructor will explain that today, students will write and practice brief elevator pitches to convince their peers to vote.

Instructor will ask: *What is an elevator pitch?* Brainstorm the key components of an elevator pitch and write these components on the board. For example,

- Be clear, be concise
- Define the problem
- Make it specific to your audience, have a call to action

Instructor will have students work in small groups to begin drafting their short pitches. Remind students to consider the following when convincing peers.

- What would you say to someone who tells you that they do not want to vote because they do not care about politics?
- What would you say to someone who says “Why should I vote now? I’m moving away to attend college next year.”
- What would you say to someone who says “I’m not old enough to vote?”

After students have written their pitches, break students into pairs, and have one student deliver the pitch while the other listens and provides feedback. Switch roles and repeat.

Debrief Discussion: Instructor will ask – *Have you included all of the relevant information to convince your peers to register to vote? If not, how can you revise?* Give students a few minutes to revise their pitches independently.

Then, ask students – *why are elevator pitches an effective tool to convince peers to vote?* As a class, brainstorm other ways to support in the voting process. Tell students that voting or supporting voters is one way they can be civically engaged in their communities. Then, give students some time to write down their answers to the following questions as exit tickets.

- Why is voting important for young people?
- What can you do to engage in the voting process?
- How will you support voters in the upcoming election?

Appendices

Appendix A – Handout

Born in the United States	U.S. citizen	Registered to vote
18 years old or will be 18 by the next election	Pass a short test on U.S. government and candidates	Lived in the U.S. your whole life
Fluent in English	21 years old or will be 21 by the next election	Not currently running for an elected office
Pay a fee at the polling place	Rescind previous registration in another county or state	Not serving a sentence for a felony conviction
Have a driver’s license	Register as a Republican or Democratic	Know all the words to the national anthem
Never committed a crime or been arrested	Show a picture ID at the polling place	Under the age of 65
Resident in the county you’re voting in for 30 days before the election	Graduated from high school	Employed or full-time student

EXHIBIT 4

Guide for Organizing Peer-to-Peer Voter Registration Drives

Voter Registration Planning Guide

This voter registration planning guide is adapted from *The Ballot Z Project*.

Overview

After the instruction of Lessons 1 through 3, high school students will create voter registration presentations (i.e. on how to register to vote) and will present these to their peers in other classes at their school. The students will bring voter registration cards to their presentations and will encourage their peers to register to vote. In some schools with staggered lunches, students might be able to present their voter registration presentations during their lunch period to other classes. These presentations might also be done during an allocated advisory block. Alternatively, students might receive permission from administrators to present to other classes during one of their free periods. To organize these presentations, we will recruit a student “leadership team” (i.e. several students who volunteer in each partner high school class) to work with administration to develop a schedule for these in-class presentations in other classrooms.

Team Roles

- 1) Facilitators – University of Pennsylvania EDUC 722 students will act as facilitators. They will convene meetings of the “leadership team” and follow up on progress.
- 2) Leadership Team – Volunteer high school students in each partner class who will organize the logistics of the voter registration drive. With the support of facilitators, they will meet with administrators to develop a schedule for in-class presentations to their peers in other classes at their school. They will make sure that all presenters have the materials they need to run successful voter registration presentations.
- 3) Presenters – All of the remaining high school students in each partner class. In teams, these students will create voter registration presentations that include three elements: why you should vote, a step-by-step guide on how to fill out the voter registration form, and how to look up your polling location on election day. Each team will present their voter registration presentations in another class to their peers.
- 4) Other High School Students – High school students in our partner schools who are *not* in one of our partner classes and who will register to vote during the in-class voter registration presentation run by the presenters.

Schedule

Meeting	Description	Deliverables
Recruitment	At the end of the Lesson 1 – Facilitators will deliver a five minute recruitment pitch to the high school students, explaining what the leadership team is and inviting them to join (Appendix A).	Facilitators should leave the high school class with at least 2 students signed up for the leadership team. Facilitators will send a follow-up email to the high school students who were interested to schedule Meeting 1.
Meeting 1	Facilitators and Leadership Team will establish goals of the registration drive. Leadership Team will plan a meeting with their administrators.	Plan a meeting with the school administrators.
Meeting 2	Facilitators, Leadership Team, and administrators meet to discuss the registration drive. The Leadership Team will leave with an administrator approved schedule for the voter registration presentations in other classes.	Leave with an administrator approved schedule for voter registration presentations in other classes.
Meeting 3	Create resource bags (i.e. with voter registration forms) for the presenters and go through any last minute preparations for next week.	
Registration Week	Presenters will present their voter registration presentations to their peers in other classes.	Presenters will collect pledge cards (Appendix B) from peers who register to vote.

Appendices

Appendix A – Leadership Team Pitch

Hello! Our names are [introduce yourselves].

We are here as part of a course at the University of Pennsylvania. We will be coming into your class over the next few weeks to talk about voting. Today, we want to see if any of you are interested in taking a leadership role in registering your peers to vote.

Everyone in this class will be participating in a voter registration drive to get your peers excited about voting and to register them to vote. But if you are interested in taking a leadership and planning role, you can join the leadership team. The leadership team has about

a 1-2 hour commitment a week for the next two weeks. You will work with administrators, send emails, and make voter registration drive schedules. If you are interested, please let us know now. You will get an email from us in the next week confirming our first meeting.

Appendix B – Pledge Cards

It is important that all students who register to vote during the in-class presentations fill out pledge cards. We will mail these back to students right before the election. This serves as a reminder to vote and there is some preliminary research which suggests that these cards increase voter turnout. Below is a sample pledge card.

I PLEDGE TO VOTE

*PLEASE PRINT USING ALL CAPITAL LETTERS

*Full Name COREY WIGGINS ☐ I'm **already** a registered voter!

Email COREY.WIGGINS@INSPIRE-USA.ORG ☒ I **registered** to vote today!

Mobile Phone (719) 648-0498 ☐ I **will** register to vote when eligible!

*High School INSPIRE H.S.

*Graduation Year 2018

*DOB 11/03/1999

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

☒ Please notify me about upcoming elections in my district.

☒ I want to get involved with Inspire!

#inspire2vote

www.inspire-usa.org

[f inspire2vote](#)

[@inspire2vote](#)

[@inspire2vote](#)

METHODS

Evaluation Design

To investigate the impact of a school-based voter education curricular intervention on youth political engagement and behavior, a program evaluation study was designed to be conducted through a quasi-experiment in three Philadelphia public high schools. While partnerships were established with five Philadelphia schools which would receive the curricular intervention in Spring 2020, three schools opted into being included in the current study: West Philadelphia High School, George Washington Carver High School of Engineering and Science, and Kensington Health Sciences Academy. The curriculum was planned to be taught by University

of Pennsylvania graduate and undergraduate students in social science and history classes at each of these partner schools. Importantly, teachers opted into this curriculum being integrated into their social science and history classes only if it did not limit or restrict the other material that students were required to learn, as per Philadelphia School District guidelines. In this way, this study would not adversely impact students' opportunity to learn required educational content.

The voting education curricular intervention begins with three lessons which were to be taught by University of Pennsylvania graduate and undergraduate students enrolled in EDUC 722. As previously discussed, these lessons were designed to teach students about the importance of voting and to build the skills essential for informed voting. Following the instruction of these three lessons, high school students would have been tasked with organizing peer-to-peer voter registration drives in their school communities with the help of the University of Pennsylvania EDUC 722 students. Through this experience, high school students would learn how to make presentations explaining the voter registration process, present these to other classes at their high school in teams, and register their peers to vote. All in all, the curricular intervention was designed to span five weeks, with one lesson taught per week for three weeks and two weeks allocated for the organization of the peer-to-peer voter registration drives.

Social science and history classes receiving the curricular intervention, heretofore referred to as treatment classes, would be compared to comparable social science and history classes not receiving *any* intervention (including voter registration presentations during registration drives), heretofore referred to as control classes, at each partner school. These control classes were different sections of the same class, often taught by the same instructor as the treatment class. For example, in one school there might be four sections of 12th grade social science, two of which might be treatment classes (receiving the full five week curricular intervention) and two of

which might be control classes (not receiving any curricular intervention). In the current study, seven social science and history classes across the three partner schools received the curricular intervention and were, therefore, considered treatment classes. A total of 195 high school students would have been included in this treatment group.

In order to assess the impact of the curricular intervention on youth political engagement and behavior, students in both the treatment and control classes at each school would complete a pretest survey prior to the start of the curricular intervention and a posttest survey at the end of the five weeks (Exhibit 5). The survey instruments at both times were the same, with questions just appearing in a different order to ensure that all questions had a similar chance of being answered. Furthermore, the surveys asked likert-type questions to assess various measures of political engagement (i.e. political interest, political discussion, and political efficacy) and political behavior (i.e. intention to vote and intention to participate civically). The survey was anonymous and confidential, and students and their parents or guardians would provide consent prior to students participating in the surveys.

Aggregate class-level metrics of political engagement (average likert measures of political interest, political discussion, and political efficacy) along with aggregate class-level metrics of political behavior (average likert measures of intention to vote and intention to participate civically) would have been compared for the treatment and control classes at each school pre and post intervention. Furthermore, individual measures of political engagement and behavior would be compared pre and post intervention for each student in the treatment classes at each school to control for individual-level differences across classes. Finally, public record registration data for students in the treatment classes (i.e. percent of students who registered to vote) would be compared to both students in classes receiving the voter registration presentations through the

voter registration drives and to students in control classes in order to measure the effect of the intervention specifically on voting behavior.

In March 2020, the COVID pandemic led to the closure of both Philadelphia schools and the University of Pennsylvania. Although the curricular intervention and research design had already been developed, all University of Pennsylvania students were restricted from teaching in the partner schools. Subsequently, in April, the state of Pennsylvania announced a substantial delay of its presidential primary and voter registration deadline. Given these events, the implementation of the curricular intervention and execution of this research became entirely unfeasible. As such, the following sections detail what would have occurred had these events not transpired. Still, it is critical to recognize that this work has led to the development of a universally applicable curricular plan including tangible voter education lessons that can be delivered in Philadelphia schools in future years.

Implementation

The study was expected to span five weeks. In the first week (i.e. Week 1), students in both treatment classes (i.e. students in the social science or history classes who receive the full five weeks of curricular intervention) and control classes (i.e. students in comparable social science or history classes who receive no curricular intervention, not even a voter registration presentation during registration drives) at each school would complete a pretest survey. This survey would be completed by the students in-class, likely at the end of a class period, and only students who assent to being included in the study would complete surveys. Later in the first week, a team of University of Pennsylvania students in EDUC 722 would teach Lesson 1 in class, during a full class period. Note that each lesson is designed to last one hour, although various extension activities are included in each lesson plan to fill longer class periods. Over the

following two weeks (i.e. Weeks 2 and 3), this same team of students would teach Lesson 2 and Lesson 3 in class, with one lesson taught per week. Importantly, the same team of EDUC 722 students would teach in each high school class, allowing high school students to establish a sense of familiarity and comfort with their University of Pennsylvania instructors over the course of the entire curricular intervention. Finally, in Weeks 4 and 5, high school students would participate in peer-to-peer voter registration drives with the assistance of EDUC 722 students. Specifically, high school students would work in teams during one class period in Week 4 to make voter registration presentations. In Week 5, each high school student team would present their voter registration presentation to at least one other high school class and would register their peers in this class to vote. At the end of Week 5, students in the treatment and control classes at each school would complete a posttest survey.

University of Pennsylvania student instruction teams would be trained to teach each lesson one week prior to the instruction of the lesson. In other words, prior to teaching Lesson 1 in Week 1, student teams will practice teaching Lesson 1 in class during EDUC 722 the previous week. Specifically, student teams will practice teaching the lesson to another team, which will subsequently provide feedback. Pairs of teams will then flip roles, such that both teams have the opportunity to receive feedback. Then, prior to teaching Lesson 2 in Week 2, student instruction teams will practice teaching Lesson 2 in class during EDUC 722 in Week 1. And finally, prior to teaching Lesson 3 in Week 3, student instruction teams will practice teaching Lesson 3 in class during EDUC 722 in Week 2. Note that throughout this period, EDUC 722 students who are *not* placed in an instructional team will be responsible for assisting the high school student Leadership Team from each partner class in planning Meetings 1 through 3 (as outlined in Exhibit 4), such that the voter registration drives can be executed successfully in Weeks 4 and 5.

Participants

The study population would have consisted of high school students in seven social studies and history classes at three Philadelphia public schools: West Philadelphia High School, George Washington Carver High School of Engineering and Science, and Kensington Health Sciences Academy. Prior to this research, the author of the current study taught a proprietary voter education curriculum over twelve weeks at William L. Sayre High School in West Philadelphia. The tremendous success of *The Ballot Z Project* curriculum at Sayre High School in this pilot program paved the way for the rapid expansion of voter education efforts to other schools. On the heels of this success, the author of the current study and Dr. Rand Quinn created EDUC 722, and met with teachers at several Philadelphia schools to discuss the possibility of bringing a new voter education curriculum developed by graduate and undergraduate students in this course to their high schools. The schools that are included in this study are those that have opted in to integrating an intra-curricular voter education intervention in social studies and history classes at their schools. In other words, these are teachers who have opted in to having the voter education curricular intervention taught by EDUC 722 students in their social studies and history classes.

After having obtained consent from teachers, students in each of the partner social studies and history classes would be given detailed information about the study and its aims. Once students have had ample time to ask any questions they might have, they would be asked to provide their verbal assent to participating in the study. It would be made clear to all participants that there are no repercussions should they prefer to not participate in the pre and posttest surveys. In the case of students under the age of 18, parents or guardian would receive a study information form and will have the opportunity to opt out of their students' participation in the

study. The high school students included in the current study are those who would have provided requisite assent and opted into study participation.

Outcome Measures

Two dependent variables, political engagement and political behavior, would have been measured to assess the impact of the curricular intervention in each school. Importantly, most of the measures in this study are based on student self-assessments through a pretest and posttest likert-type survey (Exhibit 5). This survey instrument was approved by the IRB.

Political engagement is defined as political interest, political discussion, and political efficacy. Likert-type measures for each of these constructs were developed, in part, based on surveys employed in the Verba, Burns, and Schlozman (1997) and Solt (2008) studies.

1. Political Interest – Measured by responses to the question, “How interested are you in politics?” Students will circle one answer on a four-point scale ranging from “not at all,” “a little,” “somewhat,” and “very.”
2. Political Discussion – Measured by student responses to two questions, “How often do you discuss politics?” and “Do you enjoy discussing politics?” Students will circle one answer on a four-point scale ranging from “not at all,” “a little,” “somewhat,” and “a lot.”
3. Political Efficacy – Measured by responses to the question, “How much do you feel that your vote matters?” Students will circle an answer on a four-point scale ranging from “none,” “a little,” “somewhat,” “a lot.”

Political behavior is measured by an intention to vote, an intention to participate civically (beyond voting), and voter registration.

1. Intention to Vote – Three items will be used to evaluate students’ intention to vote. Since participants may not yet be of voting age, the items will be prefaced with the following

statement, “Whether or not you are old enough to vote, how likely are you to vote in ...”

The single item measures include (a) “a Presidential primary election” (b) “a Presidential general election” (c) “a local Philadelphia election.” Students will be asked to provide their responses on a four-point scale, ranging from “not likely,” “somewhat likely,” “very likely,” and “definitely.”

2. Intention to Participate Civically – Four items will be used to assess intention to participate civically, beyond voting. The items will be prefaced with the following statement, “Suppose Philadelphia is considering passing a new law on an issue you care about. How likely are you to ...” The single item measures include (a) “attend a public hearing to voice your opinion” (b) “talk to your friends and family about the issue” (c) “sign a petition” (d) “join a march.” Once again, students will be asked to provide their responses on a four-point scale, ranging from “not likely,” “somewhat likely,” “very likely,” and “definitely.”
3. Voter Registration – Students will be asked to provide a yes or no answer to “are you registered to vote?” Importantly, this data will be used to cross-check public record registration data to identify what percentage of students in the treatment and control classes were registered to vote pre and post curricular intervention. Note that this will also be compared to the percentage of students who registered to vote in the classes receiving the voter registration presentations.

As previously discussed, these survey measures would be compared pre and post curricular intervention at the aggregate class-level for treatment and control classes at each school.

Furthermore, individual measures of political engagement and behavior would also be compared pre and post intervention for each student in the treatment classes at each school.

EXHIBIT 5

Pre and Post Curricular Intervention Survey

Survey Instrument				
<u>Voter Education Survey</u>				
<i>Instructions: This survey seeks to learn more about the effectiveness of a voter education curriculum. Your responses are confidential, so please do not write your name anywhere on this page.</i>				
Will you be 18 by May 18th, 2020? Circle one.		Yes	No	
What gender do you most identify with? Circle one.		Male	Female	Other
What race or ethnicity do you most identify with? Circle one below.				
Caucasian	Asian	Hispanic/Latin	African American/Black	Other
<i>For each question below, please write an answer on a scale from 1-4. (1 = not likely, 2 = somewhat likely, 3 = very likely, 4 = definitely)</i>				
Whether or not you are old enough to vote, how likely are you to vote in ...				
Presidential primary election?		_____		
Presidential general election?		_____		
Local Philadelphia election?		_____		
Suppose Philadelphia is considering passing a new law on an issue you care about. How likely are you to ...				
Attend a public hearing to voice your opinion?		_____		
Talk to your friends and family about the issue?		_____		
Sign a petition?		_____		
Join a march?		_____		

For each question below, please circle an answer on the scale from 1-4.

How interested are you in politics?

1
Not at all

2
A little

3
Somewhat

4
Very

How often do you discuss politics?

1
Never

2
A little

3
Sometimes

4
A lot

Do you enjoy discussing politics?

1
Not at all

2
A little

3
Somewhat

4
A lot

How much do you feel that your vote matters?

1
None

2
A little

3
Somewhat

4
A lot

Are you registered to vote? *Circle one.*

Yes

No

Do you affiliate with a political party? *Circle one.*

Yes

No

Limitations

There are several limitations worth considering. Most importantly, this study is not a randomized controlled study. Specifically, students are not randomly sorted into treatment and control groups. A randomized controlled study is difficult in this environment because students are already placed into social science and history classes prior to the curricular intervention. Students might be placed into these classes based on scheduling constraints (i.e. a particular class fits their schedule) and ability (i.e. a particular class might be more advanced). Since students are not randomly sorted into treatment and control classes, causality becomes difficult to assess.

Furthermore, several confounding variables might complicate results. If students are placed into a particular class based on ability, for example, it might be the case that the students receiving the intervention exhibit higher levels of political interest, discussion, and efficacy because of their ability, rather than because they participated in the intervention. Additionally, we partnered with schools that wanted to establish partnerships, meaning that they were either inclined to bring this intervention to students or that they were available for EDUC 722 students to come into the classroom and teach. There might be an inherent bias embedded in this sample. Schools that were inclined to bring this intervention to their students might already understand the importance of civic education, and might already have significant programming in this area. This could artificially increase the assessed measures of political engagement and behavior.

It is important to recognize these limitations, so that they might be addressed when the study can be conducted in the future. A randomized study, for example, might be possible at the class-level. If a teacher has more than one class, each class could be randomly assigned to the treatment or control condition. This would strengthen any identified relationship between the voter education curricular intervention, and student political engagement and behavior.

CONCLUSION

In this study, a five week intervention was developed to teach a voter education curriculum in Philadelphia public high schools. As part of this effort, lesson plans were designed on *The Importance of Voting*, *Becoming Informed Voters*, and *The Voting Process*. These lessons were written collectively by undergraduate and graduate students, and were reviewed by experienced teachers in the Philadelphia School District and professors at the University of Pennsylvania's Graduate School of Education. Versions of each of these lessons were also written for online learning in response to COVID. Additionally, a guideline for organizing peer-to-peer voter registration drives in the school communities was developed. The tremendous achievement of this curricular intervention is that all of these materials are easily transferable and universally applicable. This means that educators at *any* school can teach these lessons to their students and organize these voter registration drives with their students, in an effort to inspire greater political and civic engagement.

Furthermore, a research design to assess the impact of this voter education curricular intervention was also developed. Although this study was not conducted due to the COVID outbreak in Spring 2020, the proposed evaluation design, implementation, and outcome measures are discussed in great detail in hopes that this research may be conducted in the future. While the public education system was founded upon a civic mission, youth have been historically politically disengaged and have voted in record low numbers. This research will ultimately enhance civic education in the United States to inspire youth to turnout, reinvigorate the body politic, and fulfill the democratic mission of our collective project in self-governance.

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APPENDIX

EXHIBIT A

Lesson One of the Curricular Intervention, modified for online delivery

Lesson 1: The Importance of Voting
Standard: 5.2.12.A Evaluate an individual's civil rights , responsibilities, and obligations in contemporary governments .
Lesson 1 Objective: Students will understand the power and significance of the right to vote.
Lesson Question: <i>Why is voting important and how have voting rights evolved?</i>
Key Vocabulary: Voting rights, Political power, Voter suppression
<u>Activity 1</u> Launch: Students will answer the following question using a drop-down scale from 1-10. <i>How much do you think the government affects your life?</i> Read: Students will read the following article, from 6:30-7:45am: A Day in Your Life . Students will then answer the following question using a drop-down scale from 1-10. <i>After reading the article, how much do you think the government affects your life?</i> Consider: Students will answer the following short answer questions in several sentences. <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Name two parts of your morning routine that the government impacts.2. Name one way that the person from the article has a life that is different from yours.3. Knowing the differences between your life and the life of the person in this article, do you think the government serves everyone equally? How or how not? Discuss: Students will discuss the following on a discussion board with their peers. <i>What surprised you about the fact that the government affects much of our everyday lives? Please respond in 3-4 sentences.</i> <u>Activity 2</u> Watch and Discuss: What are some things you would like to see change that you now understand is something that the government can affect? Watch this video by local Philly youth, and think about how students can make a change. Students will discuss the following questions on a discussion board with their peers. <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What do you think the student meant when he said “if we stand up, we can definitely make a chance”? How do you think students can make a chance?

2. Post one issue that you would like to see changed and respond to at least two of your peers' posts to explain how the government could play a role in addressing each issue.

Students will answer the following yes or no question. *Did you write voting as one of the ways that government can play a role?*

Activity 3

Watch and Discuss: Students will answer the following yes or no question. *Do you feel empowered by the idea of voting?*

Students will watch this [video](#). As you watch the video, think about what issues voting can impact.

Students will answer the following questions by selecting answers from a drop-down menu. *What issues does the video say that voting can affect?*

1. Potholes
2. Food stamps
3. Poverty
4. Wages for workers
5. Individuals deciding the president
6. School lunches
7. Prison sentences
8. Infrastructure, like roads
9. Air and water quality

Students will discuss the following question on a discussion board with their peers.

What did this video say about voting that surprised you? Do you agree or disagree with its message? Please respond in 3-4 sentences.

Activity 4

Vocabulary Check: Not all Americans in the United States can vote. Sometimes, it is because they are not eligible to vote, but other times it is because laws or people *suppress* their right to vote. Review this [slideshow](#) to learn more about voter suppression.

Students will fill in the blanks using the word bank to complete this activity.

Use the word bank to answer the questions below.

Word Bank: Voter Turnout, Voter Suppression, Suffrage

1. _____ is a strategy used to influence the outcome of an election by discouraging or preventing specific groups of people from voting. [Answer: Voter Suppression]
2. _____ is the percentage of people who show up to vote out of the number of total possible voters. [Answer: Voter Turnout]
3. _____ is the right to vote in political elections. [Answer: Suffrage]

Activity 5

Watch and Discuss: Students will watch this [video](#) and will answer the following questions, selecting True or False. After they select their answer, students should see the correct answer and, if applicable, an accompanying explanation.

1. In 1789, 6% of the population had the right to vote. [Answer: True]
2. Poll taxes and literacy tests helped African Americans vote. [Answer: False. “Jim Crow voting laws included requirements to pass literacy tests, nearly impossible for uneducated former slaves. Other states instituted poll taxes, a financial burden that many poor African-American (and whites) were either unable or unwilling to pay.”]
3. The original Constitution explicitly states who has the right to vote. [Answer: False. The original version of the Constitution and Bill of Rights left it entirely up to the states to determine who constituted “the people,” and therefore who had a right to vote.]

Students will discuss the following questions on a discussion board with their peers.

What is one example of voter suppression from the video? Please respond in 3-4 sentences.

Many people before you fought for their right to vote. This includes African Americans, women, youth, and immigrants and other minorities. *Imagine that you did not have the right to vote. How would you feel? Please respond in 3-4 sentences.*

[Answers may include: I would be frustrated that a decision that affects me might be made without my input, I realize that I shouldn’t give up my opportunity to have a say, I realize that voting is powerful.]

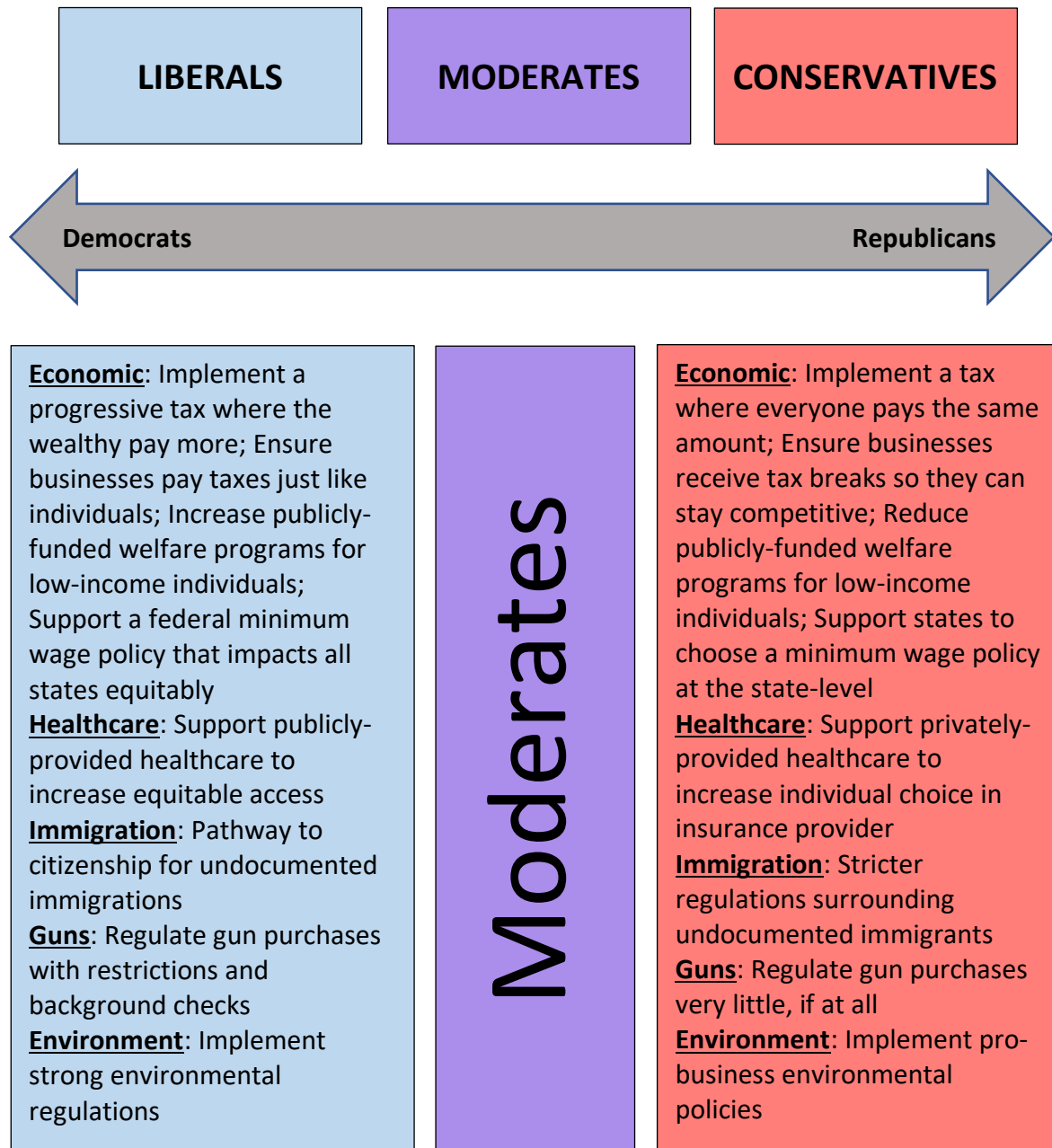
EXHIBIT B

Lesson Two of the Curricular Intervention, modified for online delivery

Lesson 2: Becoming Informed Voters	
Standard: 5.3.12.D Evaluate the roles of political parties , interest groups, and mass media in politics and in government.	
Lesson 2 Objective: Students will be able to understand and explain the differences between major political parties' issue stances, and will begin to identify their own political leanings.	
Lesson Questions: <i>What is a political party? What are the differences between the major parties' issue stances in the United States?</i>	
Key Vocabulary: Political party, Democrat, Republican, Platform	
<u>Activity 1</u> Launch: In this lesson, you will learn about the ideological differences between the two primary political parties in the United States and will evaluate the two-party system. Students will watch this video about the key differences between Republicans and Democrats. Students will answer the following questions by matching the ideas in the bank with the correct political party. Students must get all six correct to move onto the next activity. Directions: Match each idea with the party that is most likely to support it.	
<div>Idea Bank<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. There should be extensive background checks to purchase a gun2. Business taxes should be reduced3. Companies should be fined that pollute the environment4. Wealthy people should be taxed more than poor people5. Government should not have to pay for healthcare for those who cannot afford it6. Government should not try to control businesses</div>	
Democrat	Republican

Activity 2

Vocabulary Check: Below you will see a spectrum that shows how political ideology relates to political party stances on issues. Carefully review this diagram and use it to answer the following questions.



Students will fill-in-the-blanks using the word bank to complete this activity. Questions will be graded one at a time, and will either display that the answer is “correct” or will provide an explanation.

Directions: Use the word bank to answer the questions below.

Word Bank: Liberal values, Conservative values

1. Republicans tend to support more _____, while Democrats tend to support more _____.

[Answer: “Republicans tend to support more **conservative values**, while Democrats tend to support more **liberal values**.]

2. Which of the following would a Democrat be most likely to support?
 - a. The elimination of *all* federal and state income taxes.
 - b. A healthcare policy that gives citizens an option to enroll in public government healthcare.
 - c. Each state must have one Democratic and one Republican senator.

[Answer: B is correct.]

3. Which of the following would a Republican be most likely to support?
 - a. The government should limit gun regulations because the second amendment specifies that the people have the right to bear arms.
 - b. Businesses that create excessive pollution should be shut down.
 - c. *All* immigrants should be deported.

[Answer: A is correct.]

Activity 3

Watch and Learn: Now that you have explored the differences between the two primary political parties, let’s examine the role of third parties in the United States. Watch this [video](#) and pay attention to why third parties have struggled to win national elections.

Students will answer the following multiple choice questions and true/false questions. After they select their answer, students should see the correct answer and, if applicable, an accompanying explanation.

1. Which of the following is not a barrier to third parties getting elected?
 - a. America adopts a “winner takes all” principle in its election system
 - b. Duverger’s Law
 - c. The U.S. Constitution prohibits third party candidates from being elected
 - d. Low ability to fundraise

[Answer: C is correct. A, B, and D are all examples of obstacles mentioned in the video, but there is no law that actually makes it illegal for third parties to be elected.]

2. True or False: Third parties often define winning differently than Democrats or Republicans do.

[Answer: True. This video explains that third parties face barriers in winning elections, so they often make their impact by getting their issues to the front of the stage and making their voices heard.]

3. True or False: Third parties rarely win elections.

[Answer: True. This video discusses that third parties rarely win elections because of the “winner takes all” principle in the U.S.]

4. How do third parties make the greatest impact?

- a. By winning presidential and gubernatorial elections to make policy changes
- b. By donating massive amounts of money to the Democratic party so they can win elections
- c. By giving a voice to their party’s core principles and shifting national attention to particular issues

[Answer: A is not correct because third parties rarely win elections. B is not correct because third parties can support either Democratic or Republican candidates. C is correct because the video explains that third parties define winning differently, and make their impact in this way.

Activity 4

Discuss: Students will discuss the following questions on a discussion board with their peers. *Think back to the first video. George Washington famously said in his Farewell Address that “Political parties ought to be abolished.” What are 3-4 pros and cons of political parties?*

Which side is more convincing? In 3-4 sentences, summarize your opinion on whether or not the U.S. should abandon the two-party system.

Activity 5

Reflection: Not sure what party best represents your views? Take this [optional quiz](#) to select your stances on important political issues and see how they line up with the platforms of political parties today.

EXHIBIT C

Lesson Three of the Curricular Intervention, modified for online delivery

Lesson 3: The Voting Process			
Standard: 5.3.12.F Evaluate the elements of the election process .			
Lesson 3 Objective: Students will understand the basic requirements and processes surrounding voting in the U.S., from registration to the act of voting to the electoral college.			
Lesson Question: <i>What are the components of the voting process?</i>			
Key Vocabulary: Registration, Electoral College			
<u>Activity 1</u> Launch: In this lesson, you will learn about the voting process. Students will answer the following questions on a discussion board with their peers. <i>What do you know about the voting process already? What do you hope to learn?</i>			
<u>Activity 2</u> Consider: The first step to vote on election day is to register. In the United States and in Pennsylvania, specifically, there are many requirements to be eligible to vote. Students will review this table and “select” the boxes they believe are accurate. Students should see correct answers after completing the activity. Directions: Select the boxes you think are the eligibility requirements for voters in Pennsylvania.			
Be a citizen for at least 1 month before the next election	Know all the words to the national anthem	Graduated from high school	Not currently serving a sentence for a felony conviction
Registered as a member of the Republican or Democratic party	Pay a fee at the polling place	Not currently running for an elected office	21 years old by the next election
Never committed a crime or been arrested before	Be a resident of PA and your election district at least 30 days before election day	Employed or a full-time student	Have a driver’s license

Be fluent in English	Participated on a campaign	Born in the US	Be at least 18 years of age on the day of the next election
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[Correct answers are indicated in gray, and should not be gray for the activity.]

Students will review this [powerpoint](#) presentation on voting in PA.

Students will answer the following short answer questions.

Directions: Please respond briefly to each reflection question in 1-2 sentences.

1. How do you feel about these laws (felon laws, voter ID, early voting, and same day registration)?
2. Do you think they are fair?
3. If yes or no, which ones?
4. Do you think they affect all U.S. citizens equally or in the same way?

Activity 3

Read and Discuss: Voter registration is the first part of the voting process. For those who are eligible to vote, the next step is actually voting! What does a voter do on election day?

Explore interactive reading site [“The Life of a Ballot”](#) to explain the voting process.

Students will discuss the following question on a discussion board with their peers.

Because of COVID-19, election day looks a bit different this year. In Pennsylvania, the upcoming primary has been postponed to June 2nd, and all voters can now vote by mail instead of voting in person. What are other ways the voting process can be made more accessible to all voters? Please respond in 3-4 sentences.

Activity 4

Watch and Answer: In a presidential election, candidates do not win by a simple majority. Instead, we use the electoral college to elect the next president.

[Watch](#) this video until minute 1:21.

Students will answer the following questions by filling in the blanks.

Directions: Fill in the following blanks with numbers.

1. How many electoral college votes are necessary to win the presidency? _____

[Answer: 270]

2. _____ electors in total = _____ representatives + _____ senators + _____ electors

[Answer: 538; 435; 100; 3]

Continue the video until minute 2:13.

Students will answer the following short answer question.

Reflect upon the “winner takes all” principle for ballots. Why are swing states important in the general election? Please respond briefly in 1-2 sentences.

Continue the video until minute 2:56.

Students will answer the following true/false questions.

1. A presidential candidate can win the general election but lose the popular vote.

[Answer: True]

2. The elector college has little impact on the outcome of elections.

[Answer: False]

Continue the video until minute 3:54. Then explore the [interactive electoral college map](#).

Students will answer the following short answer question.

How did the general election outcome change as you changed the states on the map? Please respond briefly in 1-2 sentences.

Continue the video until the end.

Students will complete the following poll by clicking “yes” or “no.”

Should we keep the electoral college?

As of March 2020,

58% of adults support eliminating the electoral college

40% of adults support keeping the electoral college.

(Source: [Pew Research Center](#))

Activity 5

Discuss: Students will discuss the following on a discussion board with their peers.

Reflect on everything you have learned so far about voting, from voter registration to the electoral college. If you could change one part of the voting process, what would you change? Why? How would you change it. Please respond briefly in 3-4 sentences.